

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Daniel McNeil, Jr.,) C/A No. 4:07-542-TLW-TER
)
Plaintiff,)
)
vs.) Report and Recommendation
) (partial summary dismissal)
Sgt. NFN August; and)
Daniel B. Causey, III, Judge,)
)
Defendants.)
)

This is a civil rights action filed *pro se* by a person detained in a local detention center.¹ Plaintiff has been incarcerated at the Darlington County Detention Center since his arrest on January 2, 2007 for burglary and assault and battery with intent to kill. He claims that the evidence/testimony relied upon by Defendant August (the arresting officer) to support his arrest is false and that Defendant August did not conduct a complete investigation before filing the charges against him. As a result, Plaintiff claims that he was wrongfully (or falsely) arrested and imprisoned. Plaintiff specifically states that, as of the time he completed his Complaint, he had not been brought before a judge to allow him to object to his arrest.

Plaintiff does not include any allegations of wrongdoing against Defendant Causey, however, he does list what appear to be arrest warrant numbers: "F-183529 & F-183530." As a result, it appears that Defendant Causey might have been the judicial officer who issued those warrants, and, under the liberal construction of *pro se* pleadings rule, such activity by Defendant Causey will be implied for purposes of this Report and Recommendation. Plaintiff asks this Court to order dismissal of the charges against him, to order arrest of two other persons, and to award him compensatory damages for the time he is locked up on

¹ Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §636(b)(1), and Local Rule 73.02(B)(2)(e), D.S.C., this magistrate judge is authorized to review all pretrial matters in such *pro se* cases and to submit findings and recommendations to the District Court. *See also* 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e); 1915A (as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal).

the allegedly improper charges.

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of Plaintiff's *pro se* Complaint filed in this case. This review has been conducted pursuant to the procedural provisions of 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915, 1915A, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1996, and in light of the following precedents: Denton v. Hernandez, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); Neitzke v. Williams, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); Nasim v. Warden, Maryland House of Correction, 64 F.3d 951 (4th Cir. 1995)(*en banc*); Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983); Boyce v. Alizaduh, 595 F.2d 948 (4th Cir. 1979).

Pro se complaints are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, Gordon v. Leeke, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a complaint filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. Hughes v. Rowe, 449 U.S. 5, 9-10 & n.7 (1980); Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* complaint, the plaintiff's allegations are assumed to be true. Fine v. City of New York, 529 F.2d 70, 74 (2d Cir. 1975). Nevertheless, the requirement of liberal construction does not mean that this Court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. Weller v. Department of Social Servs., 901 F.2d 387(4th Cir. 1990). Even under this less stringent standard, however, the Complaint filed in this case is subject to partial summary dismissal as to Defendant Causey only under the provisions of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B).

As previously stated, under the liberal interpretation of *pro se* pleadings rule, it is implied that Defendant Causey issued the arrest warrants that Plaintiff claims are based on false evidence. Plaintiff believes that he should be able to receive damages from Defendant Causey based on his actions in connection with the issuance of the warrant, but he is mistaken because Defendant Causey is absolutely immune from such claims based on the his performance of judicial functions. See Mireles v. Waco, 502 U.S. 9 (1991); Stump v. Sparkman, 435 U.S. 349, 351-64 (1978); Pressly v. Gregory, 831 F.2d 514, 517 (4th

Cir. 1987)(a suit by South Carolina inmate against two Virginia magistrates); Chu v. Griffith, 771 F.2d 79, 81 (4th Cir. 1985)(“It has long been settled that a judge is absolutely immune from a claim for damages arising out of his judicial actions.”); *see also Siegert v. Gilley*, 500 U.S. 226 (1991)(immunity presents a threshold question which should be resolved before discovery is even allowed); Burns v. Reed, 500 U.S. 478 (1991)(safeguards built into the judicial system tend to reduce the need for private damages actions as a means of controlling unconstitutional conduct); Mitchell v. Forsyth, 472 U.S. 511, 526 (1985)(absolute immunity “is an immunity from suit rather than a mere defense to liability”).

Recommendation

Accordingly, it is recommended that the District Court partially dismiss the Complaint in this case as to Defendant Causey only *without prejudice* and without issuance and service of process. *See Denton v. Hernandez; Neitzke v. Williams; Haines v. Kerner; Brown v. Briscoe*, 998 F.2d 201, 202-04 & n. * (4th Cir. 1993); Boyce v. Alizaduh; Todd v. Baskerville, 712 F.2d at 74; *see also* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B); 28 U.S.C. § 1915A (as soon as possible after docketing, district courts should review prisoner cases to determine whether they are subject to summary dismissal). The Complaint should be served on the remaining Defendant. Plaintiff's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

Respectfully submitted,

s/Thomas E. Rogers, III
Thomas E. Rogers, III
United States Magistrate Judge

October 18, 2007
Florence, South Carolina

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Court Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. In the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court judge need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must “only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.” *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005).

Specific written objections must be filed within ten (10) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). The time calculation of this ten-day period excludes weekends and holidays and provides for an additional three (3) days for filing by mail. Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a) & (e). Filing by mail pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
P.O. Box 2317
Florence, South Carolina 29503

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *United States v. Schronec*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985).